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DEVELOPMENT OF THE GOTHIC ROMANCE

BY

NETTIE ELIZABETH MYERS

A. B. Augustana College, Rock Island, Ill., 1906

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

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IN ENGLISH

IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

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1909

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May 29, 1909.

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Nettie Elizabeth Myers

ENTITLED The Gothic Romance

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Master of Arts

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INTRODUCTION.

This thesis aims to disclose the results of my research pertaining to that period of the Romantic Movement in English literature which is known as Gothic. This is a term applied to that division in the revival of the past which sprang into being at the same time that Gothic architecture and a love for Gothic chivalry and for old world associations were being revived.

The Gothic literary productions were prose romances, beginning with Horace Walpole's Castle of Otranto (1764) and continuing up to the time of Scott. They differ as much from the novels of the classical age as Gothic architecture does from the Grecian. Because this style of literature came into vogue with Gothic architecture we should infer that it received its name from this mode of building, but we cannot say definitely, for there were other ways in which the word gothic was used. Prior to 1750 it served as a synonym for "barbarous," and also for "mediaeval." This difference in the use I have endeavoured to bring out in my first chapter.

Though the Castle of Otranto is truly Gothic in its setting of castle, feudal times and chivalric manners, and in its "barbarous" treatment, as the classicists would have termed it, we do not find all those Gothic romances which follow similar to

it except in tone. William Godwin's Caleb Williams is of the revolutionary type, Beckford's History of the Caliph Vathek is an oriental tale, and Mrs. Shelley's Frankenstein has a pseudo-scientific basis. Then in order to make the term fit them all it is necessary to pick out their common characteristics. These seem to be terror and mystery such as are aroused by supernatural agencies and fostered by a superstitious and overly susceptible mind.

In my second chapter, the forces which led up to this particular movement and helped to make it popular, are briefly outlined. This is to show that this period of romanticism is a natural outcome of foregoing tendencies and that it did not spring full formed from the whimsical but brilliant mind of Horace Walpole.

The third chapter is a review of the chief Gothic romances to show the qualities or characteristics which class them as such. They are also classed under different heads as they vary from the original examples from being written under different circumstances and at different times.

The fourth chapter shows the reactionary tendencies against Gothicism. As is always to be expected, reaction follows action, so that the realizing of improbable places and events, of overdrawn characters with their high strung sensibilities which follows Gothicism is but a natural consequence.

CHAPTER 1.

The definitions for Gothic are about as numerous and inadequate as those for romanticism or realism. Each one seems to be good as far as it goes, but is not inclusive enough. What I have to offer here is more suggestive than conclusive.

Very naturally we say that "Gothic" means "pertaining to the Goths." These people we know overran the Roman empire and installed their mode of living. Like them these romances usurped other territory as that of classicism, broke down established ruled and classic precepts, and introduced new ideas as those of imagination and romance over those of reason and classicism. Or as these romances dealt with chivalry there may be a reference to those Gothic princes who revived chivalry after the Crusades. Charles Yorke in a letter to Bishop Hurd dates chivalry from that time and says "When the ardor of the Crusades was abated in some sort, though not extinguished, the Gothic princes and their families had settled into established monarchies.¹" Then it was that chivalry arose which afforded an outlet for that warlike spirit fostered in the Crusades.

The Gothic romances had their beginning in those barbarous ages when Gothic minstrels were singing the songs of chivalry and legendary heroes. Hurd says "the ages we call bar-

¹Hurd's Works, vol.IV, "Letters on Chivalry and Romance." (1762).

barous present us with many a subject of curious speculation. What for instance is more remarkable than Gothic Chivalry? or than the spirit of romance, which took its rise from that singular institution?"¹

As the Goths were barbarians, Gothic came to mean barbarous. Formerly it signified the manners and inventions of a people as a race, but its meaning degenerated into one of contempt descriptive of anything which was rude or unsophisticated. The classicists in the age of Pope, hating anything which savoured of romanticism, styled all tendencies not conforming to classic laws, "gothic," which included even the old English authors.

Following are some instances showing this use of the word:

"Night, Gothicism, confusion and absolute chaos have come again."- Shenstone.²

"That late and we may add Gothic practise of using a multiplicity of notes."- Goldsmith, Introduction to History of the World.²

"Close by me stood the great chair of coronation rudely carved in oak, in the barbarous taste of a rude and gothic age."- Irving, Sketch Book.²

"Dinner was eaten at the Gothic hour of one o'clock."- J.F. Hewlett, Parish Clerk.² l iii.

¹Hurd's Works, vol.IV, "Letters on Chivalry and Romance."

²Century dictionary.

"We are not so Barbarous or Gothick as they pretend."-
Shaftsbury, Char. vol.1, iii, 274. (1733) (1711)¹

"His Charles XII's temper grew daily more fierce and Gothick."- Burnet Own Time, 1715. V 222.¹

"Let men's fancy prove ever so barbarous, or their fashions ever so Gothic in their architecture, sculpture, or whatever other designing art."- Shaftsbury, Char. (1900), 1, 227.

Addison and other Augustans who formed their judgements according to the canons of classicism, did all in their power to keep this romantic sentiment which they knew was running along like an undercurrent waiting for an opportunity to leak through to the surface. They deplored the tendencies of the times, for they saw that conservatism was gradually yielding to this un-governed enthusiasm.

In Spectator 409 he says, "I have endeavoured in several of my speculations to banish this Gothic taste which has taken possession among us."

The same complaint is found in many contemporary writers. Shaftsbury asks "whether there remains not still among us noble Britons something of that original barbarous and Gothic relish not wholly purged away, when, even at this hour, romances and gallantries of like sort, together with works as monstrous of other kinds, are current and in vogue, even with the people who

¹Century Dictionary

constitute our reputed polite world."¹

Duelling a "gothic custom."- The Free Thinker, no.15.
(1718).

²"This gothic crime of duelling."- Berkeley, Alciphron,
(1732).

"Oh, more than Gothic ignorance answered the lady."-
Tom Jones, VII, (1749) iii.

²"There lived in Gothic days, as legends tell, a Shepherd
swain."- Beattie Minstrel. I, XI, 1771.

²"A castle in Gothick romance."- Johnson, Lett. to Mrs.
Thrale, 1773.

"He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose, And tedious years
of Gothic darkness past, emerged all splendour in our isle at
last."- Cowper, Table Talk, (1782).

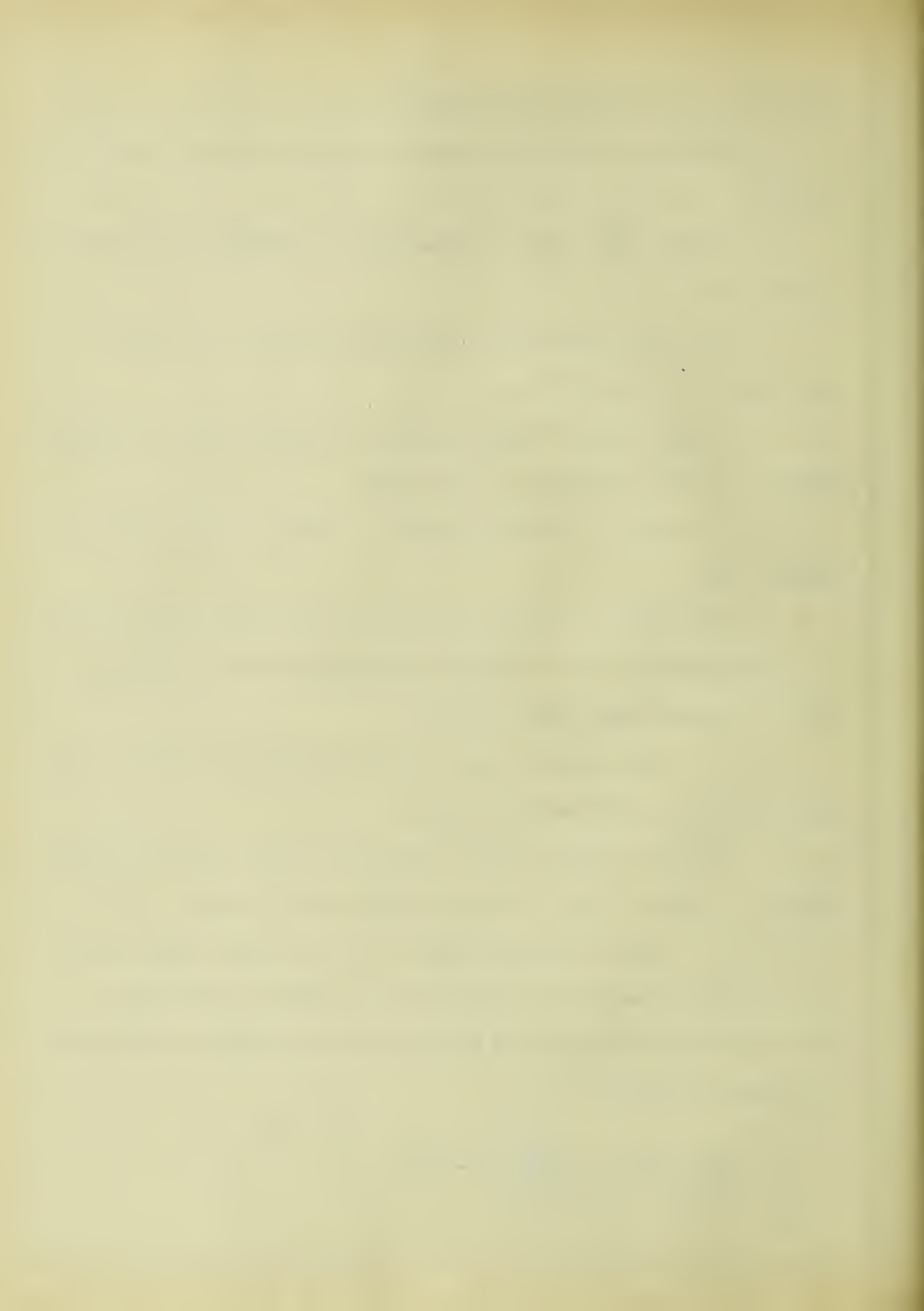
This has the same tone as Shenstone's "night, Goth-
icism, confusion, and absolute chaos."

"What he holds of all things to be most Gothic, is gal-
lantry to women."- Miss Burney, Cecilia, IV ii (1782).

The classical opinion of the time was well summed
up in a single sentence by Dryden in Du Fresnoy's Art Poet.
"All that has nothing of the ancient gust is called a barbarous
or Gothique manner."

¹ Shaftsbury, Char., vol. II.

² Century Dictionary.



It is interesting to observe how some of the Gothic writers used the word, as Shelley author of the wild story Zastrozzi used it, "Enormities which gleam like comets through the gothic and superstitious ages."¹ This coupling of gothic with superstitious is noteworthy as one of the characteristic features of the Gothic romance is its treatment of superstition. Mrs. Radcliffe speaks of the "Gothic gloom of the surrounding buildings."² Other writers use it in the architectural sense. A gothic gloom may mean dense, impenetrable or suggestive of dark deeds.

"Such a Gothic spoliation as this."- Chalmers, Const. Man. 11 1833.

"After a long night of tasteless Gothicism."- Italy as it is., J.P. Best.,

"Visiting the galleries and palaces of Rome, I felt an itching to put my Gothicism on paper."- New Monthly Mag. VII, 28 1823.

This means, I suppose, that the person felt his opinions were inferior because he could not judge but by his own untutored feelings. This accords with the classicists' idea that Gothicism is ignorance, untrained sentiments, and unrestrained imagination.

¹ Shelley's Prose Works. (1888) 11 384.

² Mysteries of Udolpho, 340.

The name most thought of in connection with Gothic is Horace Walpole. Just why he called his Castle of Otranto a Gothic story is an enigma. We perhaps would think it was named after the style of his Gothic castle at Twickenham. In a letter to Rev. Mr. Cole, Mar.9th, 1765, he writes, in regard to his stay, which was suggested by a very thrilling dream, "A very natural dream for a head filled like mine with Gothic story." At this time his mind was taken up with whimsical notions about Gothic architecture and his museums of antiquated curiosities, the result of a Gothic taste. For "Whatever was old was absurd and Gothic an epithet applied to all mediaeval art, philosophy or social order, became a simple word of contempt."¹ Possibly Walpole would have hesitated sometime before reaching a satisfactory answer, for this may have been done with as little consciousness of the wonderment it would create as the writing of his romance would be the type for succeeding ones. Yet we feel he had reference to his castle, because the above quotation is parenthetical after a sentence in which Walpole says he dreamed he was in an ancient castle.

¹ Leslie Stephen, English Thought in the 18th Cen. 11, X11, 445.

"One would have thought that in his life, as in those of all his generation, Gothic would have been a synonym for barbaric."¹ And he must have shared, in some degree, this popular idea but without the zeal of classicism. In one of his letters he said, "Without ranging myself among classics, I assure you, were I to print anything with my name, it should be plain Horace Walpole, Mr. is one of the Gothicisms I abominate."² How are we to reconcile this statement with a 'Gothic story' unless we say he named his romance after the style of his castle and his love for Gothic or Chivalric manners?

This leads us to the consideration of Gothic architecture, which, lying in a state of neglect and scorn, was revived and popularized about the same time that Gothic machinery entered into literature. And, singularly enough, these two revivals declared themselves in Walpole's castle and romance.

As Eastlake says, "It is impossible to peruse either the letters or the romances of this remarkable man without being struck by the unmistakable evidence which they contain of his mediaeval predilections. The position which he occupies in regard to art resembles in many respects that in which he stands as a man of letters. His labours are not profound in either field. But this result was presented to the public in a

¹ Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library. I 37/

² Walpole's Letters. II, 322.

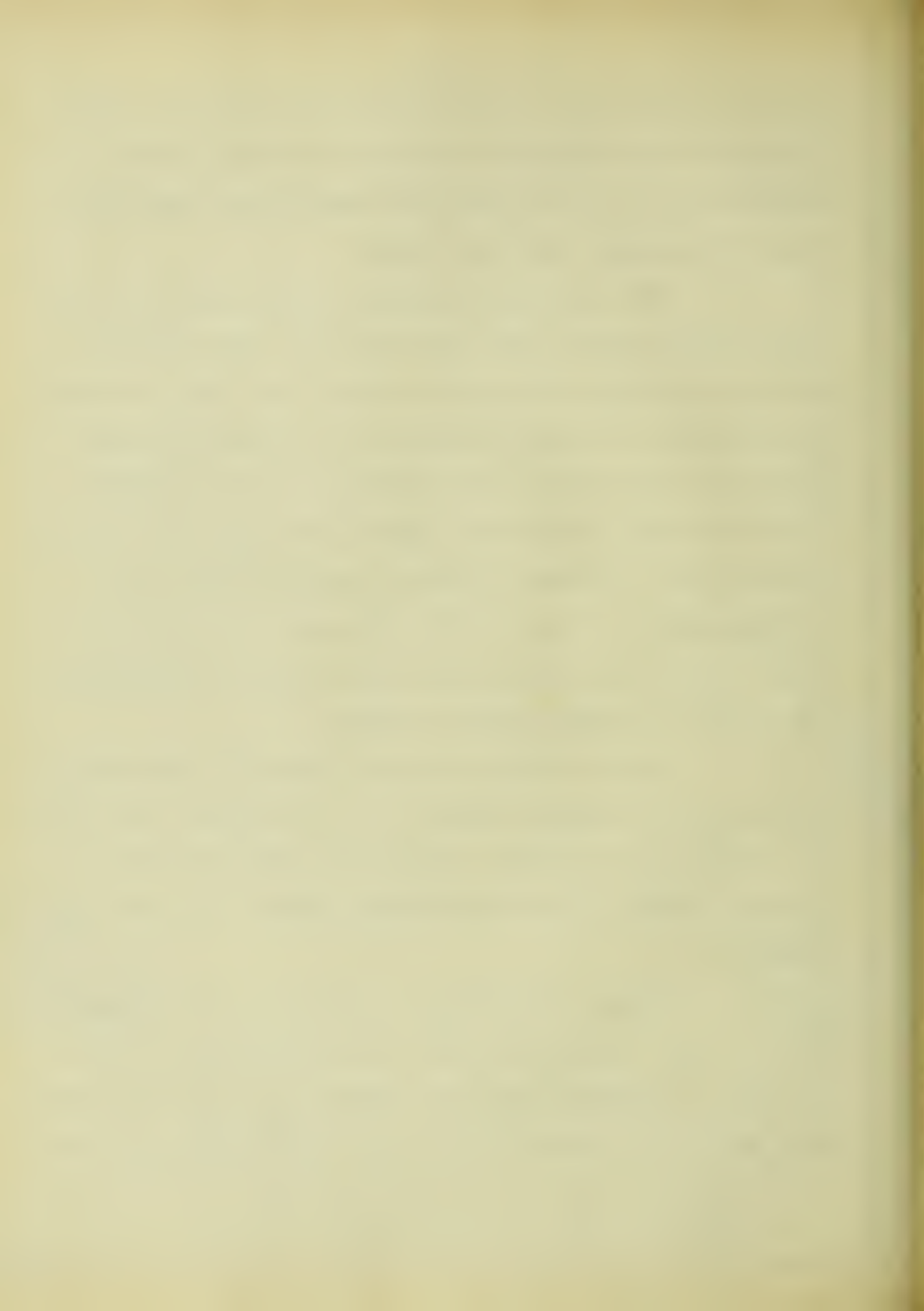
form which gained him rapid popularity both as an author and a dilettante. As a collector of curiosities he was probably influenced more by a love of old world associations than by any sound appreciation of artistic design.¹

This shows how unconscious was this turn in romanticism towards anything that was Gothic. But once it had outward expression in a castle and a romance how quickly it entered into popularity. The new buildings all over England had something Gothic about them, towers, windows or arches, and old Gothic buildings that had been neglected for years were repaired. Fonthill Abbey, the home of Beckford, another Gothic writer, and Abbotsford, the home of Scott, who marks the culmination of Gothic romance, are in direct line with the patched pretensions but nevertheless Gothic castle of Walpole.

Before 1750 there was much disrespect shown Gothic architecture, as Eastlake remarks, "If in the history of British art there is one period more distinguished than another for its neglect of Gothic, it was certainly the middle of the 18th century."

Addison, speaking of the different tastes of architecture, says, "Let anyone reflect on the disposition of mind he finds in himself, at his first entrance into the Pantheon at Rome and how his imagination is filled with something great and

¹Eastlake, Hist. of Gothic Revival, 42 & seq.



amazing; and at the same time consider how little in proportion he is affected with the inside of a Gothick Cathedral though it be five times larger than the other; which can arise from nothing else but the greatness of the manner in the one and the meanness in the other.¹"

This is an unjust criticism. If a Gothic cathedral is to be measured by Grecian rules, it is a mass of incongruous lines; but if measured by its own standard it is correct and beautiful. As Hurd says, "The question is not which of the two is conducted in the simplest and truest taste; but whether there be any sense and design in both, when scrutinized by the laws on which each is projected."²

We can apply this attitude to Gothic literature as well. If it is measured by classic rules, it is unnatural, grotesque, and wild, but has merit when read with unprejudiced minds, for it is interesting and picturesque in its romantic tone.

The word Gothic even as applied to architecture does not mean that the Gothic people may have invented that style but that it was a different type from that of former ages. "This epithet was originally applied in scorn by Italian Renaissance architects to every species of art which had existed from the decay of the Roman art until the outward forms of that art were

¹Spectator No. 415.

²Hurd's Works vol. 1V 296.

revived as patterns of imitation; but although no longer used in a depreciative sense, the adjective is inappropriate as applied to one of the noblest styles of architecture ever developed, which owes nothing whatever to the Goths, and is seldom now described as Gothic in any other language than English.¹

This seems to be the case with literature. The word is no longer used in the depreciative sense, it means the style of writing as differentiated from other styles, just as it designates the difference in the styles of building.

This connection between literature and architecture is very intimate; one can not be treated without recourse to the other. This comparison is generally drawn, however, to emphasize the contempt which the writer holds for either one or the other. To quote from Dennis: 'A poem with a fable "to our neighbors who have constantly been used to Art and Conduct, must seem as awkward and as disagreeable, as our Gothic Cathedrals would be to those Italians who have always frequented St. Peters."² And, from Shaftsbury, "Without the encouragement and propagation of such a race ³critics, we should remain as Gothic architects as ever."

There is no one reason why the new style in literary productions, which reigned in England after the appearance of the

¹Century Dictionary.

²Dennis, "The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry. Ed. (1719) 1.

³Shaftsbury Char. Ed. 1900 vol. 1, 153.

"Castle of Otranto" in 1764, should be called "Gothic." A great many reasons enter in to explain the problem, which seemed insoluble at first but clears up as the study of it progresses. We have seen how Gothic means "pertaining to mediaeval manners as portrayed in feudalism and chivalry at the time of the Goths." In that age, the going in quest of adventures was the chief aim of the knight, and their exploits were shrouded in superstitions which readily excites terror and mystery. These three elements remain throughout the Gothic romances, though the mediaeval setting is not always observed.

This revival of the manners of these old superstitious ages must have shocked the classicists, whose rigid reason never allowed any flights of imagination. They probably would have hated to class this new romance "English," which was too unconventional for their age. They gave it the name of "Gothic" just as everything else which deviated from formal custom was called "Gothic." This is similar to the way in which Gothic architecture got its name. It originated in the mediaeval ages; was barbarous and rude compared to Roman art which it succeeded and was termed "Gothic" by those disciples of Roman manners.

CHAPTER 11.

Gothic literature is a natural outcome of the forces at work since the age of Pope to liberate form and subject matter from classic rules. There sprang up a love for nature and a love for the more subtle sentiments of mankind. Ramsay, Thomson, Collins, Mason and Gray display imaginative qualities in their poetry which show the romantic enthusiasm for free play of the feelings, especially those of the deep, pensive kind.

The old ballads were being revived. Men were collecting scattered sheets and making a collection of them, first as a pastime for satisfying their taste for relics, and then as a valuable compilation when they recognized how the ballad spirit fitted into the romantic spirit of the time. The most valuable collection is Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry", published in 1765. This work established old ballad literature in the estimation of the people. It was received with enthusiasm and seemed to meet a popular demand. It strengthened love for romance and chivalry, and regard for old English poetry.

The revival of the past was also demonstrated in the revival of northern mythology, Welsh poetry and Macpherson's Ossian. In regard to the latter, Phelps says, "its wildness, melancholy sublimity- entire disregard of conventionality- these

were the qualities that gave Ossian its enormous popularity."¹

The love of chivalry, the wild and the picturesque figures especially in the Spenserian imitations and the love of melancholy in the Miltonic imitations. The chivalry, fairy and supernatural life of the Faerie Queene and the pensive melancholy of Il Penseroso delighted the romanticists who strove to pattern their productions after those of the neglected poets. Spenser and Milton had been treated with indifference during the classic age just for this romantic tone which was to create admiration and a desire for imitation in the romantic period. Spenser's influence can be more clearly traced than Milton's for his imitators copied his smooth versification, his old English words and his chivalric subjects. Milton's imitators followed the solemn trend of his thought which filled his early poems, and exerted a general influence. The School of Melancholy and the Grave-yard School copy the quiet, twilight landscape, the meditative melancholy, death and mystery of the future. Gray in his Elegy marks the height of the latter school and describes all the shaded sights and sounds, the gloom of the mind surrounded by objects suggestive of death, which show the Miltonic spirit.

The principal poets in the School of Melancholy were Joseph and Thomas Warton, who were romanticists from choice and

¹Phelps, Beginnings of English Romantic movement, 153.



enthusiastic in their defiance of Classicism. More emphatic in his romantic beliefs than his brother is Thomas Warton. He wrote the Pleasures of Melancholy, a companion to the Enthusiast. Besides other poems of intrinsic value which helped the cause of romanticism, the Observations on the Faery Queen had a marked influence. This work was published in 1754 and gave a strong defense for chivalry, romantic subjects and tone. This is a wonderful help towards paving the way for Gothicism. Joseph wrote the Enthusiast in 1740, which has the minor tone and feeling of romanticism, and is considered one of the important poems of the period. But his strongest influence lies in his Essay on Pope which shows his defiant spirit towards classicism. This is the first attack on Pope and his poetry, and the final blow was struck against the classic school in this work.

This production was the inspiration and model of Bishop Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance which had a more defiant spirit, however. This work, published just two years before the first Gothic romance, is particularly important to the Gothic cause. It is a vindication of Gothic manners, and, coming from a man in high position whose opinion was greatly esteemed, raised Gothicism to high favor with the people.

Hurd aimed to show that Gothic manners are superior to Grecian, and that the contempt into which the Gothic had

fallen was due to the fact that it had no Homer to immortalize it. He thinks that that great poet would have preferred the "improved gallantry of the Knights, and the superior solemnity of their superstitions¹," for Gothicism furnished the poet with "finer scenes and subjects...than the simple uncontrolled barbarity of the Grecian. For the more solemn fancies of witchcraft and incantation, the Gothic are above measure striking and terrible."¹

He points out the Gothic elements in Shakespear, Milton, and Spencer, in their use of witches, dragons, serpents and supernatural agencies. Shakespear, he says, "is greater when he uses Gothic manners and machinery, than when he employs classical." And what would Macbeth be without its witches and Hamlet without its ghost! Hurd says further that Milton adopted the Classic only "after long hesitation; his favorite subject was Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table²;" and the "Faerie Queene then, as a Gothic poem, derives its method as well as the other characters of its composition, from the established modes and ideas of chivalry."³

At the close of the VIth Letter he says, "The fancies of our modern bards are not only more gallant, but, on a change of the scene, more sublime, more terrible, more alarming than those of the classic fables. In a word, you will find that

¹Hurd's Works. Letters on Chivalry and Romance, 281.

²Ibid. 292.

³Ibid. 279.

the manners they paint, and the superstitions they adopt, are the more poetical for being Gothic."

Another indication of the popularity of chivalric manners is the historical romance Longsword by Rev. Thomas Leland, published in the same year as Hurd's Letters, 1762. This work is a story of feudal times, chivalric deeds and courtesy of brave knights towards virtuous maidens. It is the forerunner of Scott's novels and contains the historic setting for the Castle of Otranto. A noteworthy point is the purpose of its being written which was "to amuse" so unlike the didactic aims of former works. This romance plays an important part at this time in putting into story form those sentiments which had been wrought in poetry and essays, and in contributing the historic elements to future romances.

Thus everything of a Gothic flavor became more popular after the middle of the 18th century. The Warton brothers in the early fifties had erased vestiges of classicism through their vindictive poetry and especially Joseph Warton's Essay on Pope. Ballad literature which occupied the minds of relic seekers at first became a valuable literary acquisition. It made one of the most influential books of the time for creating the love for ancient trophies in Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry. In 1762, the growing tendency towards old world customs of feudal

times was made manifest in Leland's Longsword while Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance extolled Gothic manners, and defended the "striking," "terrible," and "sublime" of Gothic machinery.

CHAPTER 111.

The first work to be considered in this chapter is Count Fathom by Tobias Smollett, published in 1753. It is not entitled a "Gothic romance" but bears such close resemblance to the Gothic romances that we can not afford to overlook it.

All it lacks of being Gothic is that the author did not name it so, for it has all the mystery of dark forests, terrific storms, grave-yard excursions, ghosts and awful solitudes of those woods which follow. It is too imaginative, free and mystic to be classed with the realistic, restrained, and didactic novels of Richardson and Fielding. Count Fathom is a kind of transition work between classic and romantic novels.

In the preface the author says "The impulse of fear, which is the most violent and interesting of all the passions, remains longer than any other upon the memory." And he has succeeded in impressing some fearful scenes upon the reader's mind; for instance the night the Count passed in the robbers hut- a solitary hovel in the midst of a gloomy forest. Here are aroused the awful dread of approaching horror and the experiencing of the cold sweat and trembling limbs which fall to the lot of the Gothic heroes.

Smollett made use of mystery but such as admitted

an explanation. One mysterious scene is that one in which the lover Renaldo visits his Monimia's grave. "The clock struck twelve, the owl screeched from the ruined battlements...the sexton conducted the despairing lover to a dreary aisle. 'Peace' said he, "to the gentle heart of this silent habitation." Then dismissing his attendants he falls prostrate upon the grave where he remains till morning. Next night he repeats his solemn visitation and hears the notes of an organ "touched by an invisible hand" and in the sudden illumination discerns a "woman arrayed in white" who cries "Renalto." Terror stricken, with hair standing upright and a "cold vapour thrilling every nerve" he strives to clasp the phantom but feels instead the warm substance of the real Monimia who had feigned death to be rid of the villainous Count Fathom and to call her lover back to her.

Nearly every incident which Smollett presents has a suspicious turn to it, completing the "banquet of woe" prepared for the character. Strange to say but the character seems to delight in his misery as in the case when Renaldo visits the grave. "The uncommon darkness of the night, the solemn silence and lonely situation of the place, conspired with the occasion of his coming, and the dismal images of his fancy, to produce a real rapture of gloomy expectation which the whole world would not have persuaded him to disappoint." This mysterious treatment of

superstition and this exaggeration of mental traits, especially of the gloomy sort, is predominant in the following romances. Before this time, ghosts, devils, and the like were described as real persons would be and were not empowered to afflict their victims' minds with mysterious apprehensions. Now the characters are moved about in a realm of mystic wonder till they are brought into sudden enlightenment which they seem to take as a matter of course while the reader feels his imagination has been imposed upon. This "exciting fear and then letting it suddenly tumble flat" is one of the tricks of Gothicism.¹

Besides terror and mystery which Smollett added to the novel of the early 18th century, Walpole contributed chivalric setting and characters, supernatural agencies and the Gothic name. This new style became the type for succeeding writers, whose romances come under the general head of Gothic but are enough unlike one another to be treated under the sub-heads of "supernatural, mechanical or psychological and revolutionary."²

The first of the supernatural romances is the Castle of Otranto written by the whimsical aristocrat Horace Walpole and published in 1764. It is the result of a dream in which the author was in an ancient castle and saw a gigantic hand in armor upon the "uppermost bannister of a great staircase."³ This super-

¹ Cross, W.L., Development of the English Novel, (1909) 101.

² Loshe, L.D., Early American Novel, (1907) 30.

³ Walpole's Letter to Rev. Mr. Cole.

natural size is applied to the main objects throughout the story, perhaps to make the events more terrible and awe-inspiring. The helmet which crushes the tyrant's son is a hundred times larger than any "casque made for human being," the sword requires a hundred men to carry it, a giant in armor haunts an upper chamber and terrifies the domestics, and the statue of Alfonso the original owner of the castle is a hundred times life size. The scene is laid in a remote castle with a subterranean passage leading to a great church, a trap door opened by an iron ring, long dark corridors and a gloomy tower where the hero is imprisoned. The chief characters are the tyrant, the illegal possessor of the Castle, his beautiful niece, his ward, a patient wife, beautiful obedient daughter, the hero ignorant of his high birth who is heir to the castle, a priest, the adviser of the family, and loquacious servants whose superstitious fears heightens the mystery which surrounds the castle. Such characters are reproduced in the following romances but with more attention paid to the workings of their minds as impressed by surrounding mysteries. They are also dispensed with in the same fashion, the tyrant and his family succumb to the curse which has overshadowed them, the rightful heir is restored to his property and the beautiful accomplished heroine to her lover.

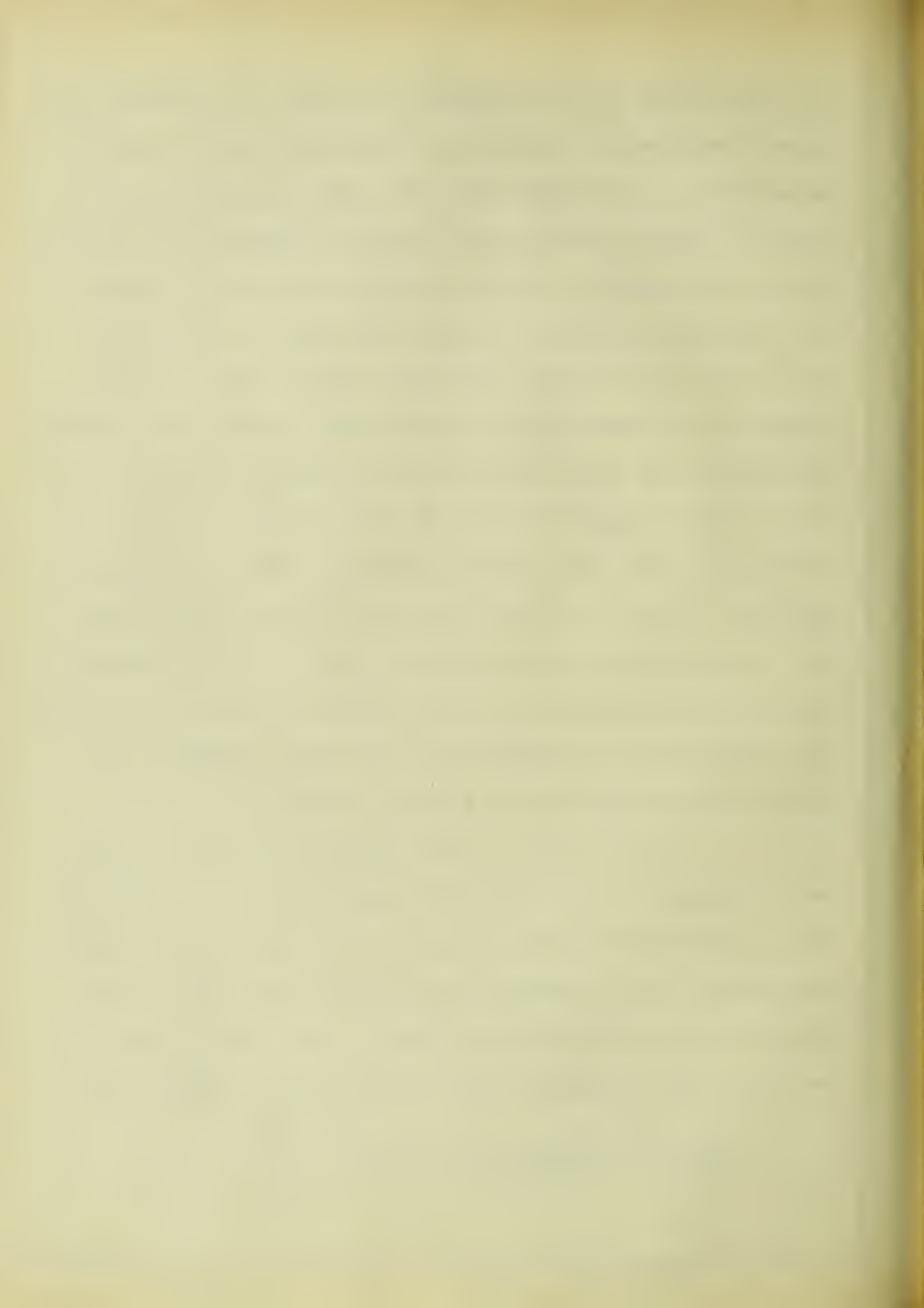
The story is lively and short; its five chapters, as

the author tells us, are arranged on the plan of the drama.¹ Its brevity and dramatic action are its tolerant features. There is no portrayal of individual character, and no description of scenery, except a dark forest to effect a hiding place, peals of thunder to accompany terrific scenes as the falling to pieces of the castle, and moonbeams to assist some fugitive to find the opening of a secret door. The supernatural scenes are too incredible to be marvelous, one cannot read certain scenes without feeling that the author laughed when he wrote them; as for instance when the gigantic helmet fell from the sky upon the son crushing him, when the gigantic sword burst from its supporters and fell opposite the helmet, when three drops of blood fell from the nose of a statue, or when the immense form of Alfonso rose amidst the ruins of the castle, while thunder pealed around him, cried "Behold in Theodore the true heir of Alfonso," and disappeared in the clouds in a "blaze of glory."²

In the preface to the first edition Walpole half way apologizes for his unnatural creations. He says, "the principal incidents are such as were believed in the darkest ages of Christianity, but the language and conduct have nothing that savours of barbarism." In the preface to the second edition he says "it is an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the

¹Castle of Otranto, Pref. iii.

²Castle of Otranto, V.



ancient and the modern¹." This accounts for the descriptions of contemporary manners in a mediaeval setting which Miss Clara Reeve sought to improve upon in her Old English Baron (1777).

Miss Reeve's production has the same character studies and the same plot as the Castle of Otranto. It is more historical, however, as if it would combine Longsword and Castle of Otranto and weaves its mystery around only a portion of the castle. This confining of the ghosts to a remote wing or chamber is a contrivance which succeeding Gothic romancers have made use of.

The History of the Caliph Vathek by William Beckford appeared in 1786. It gives another direction to Gothic literature, changing the scene of events to the Orient. The chief character is not a tyrannical feudal lord but a domineering Caliph whose eye, when he was angry, was "so terrible that no person could bear to behold it" and "sometimes he expired." He and his mother to satisfy their curiosity to know all things went in league with the Powers of Darkness. Shut up in their enormous tower² were mummies, rhinoceros horns and the like which they burned to make the evil spirits. Some scenes are abhorring, and some are as grotesque as in the Castle of Otranto, which can not be appreciated unless "we catch the twinkle in the writer's eye".³

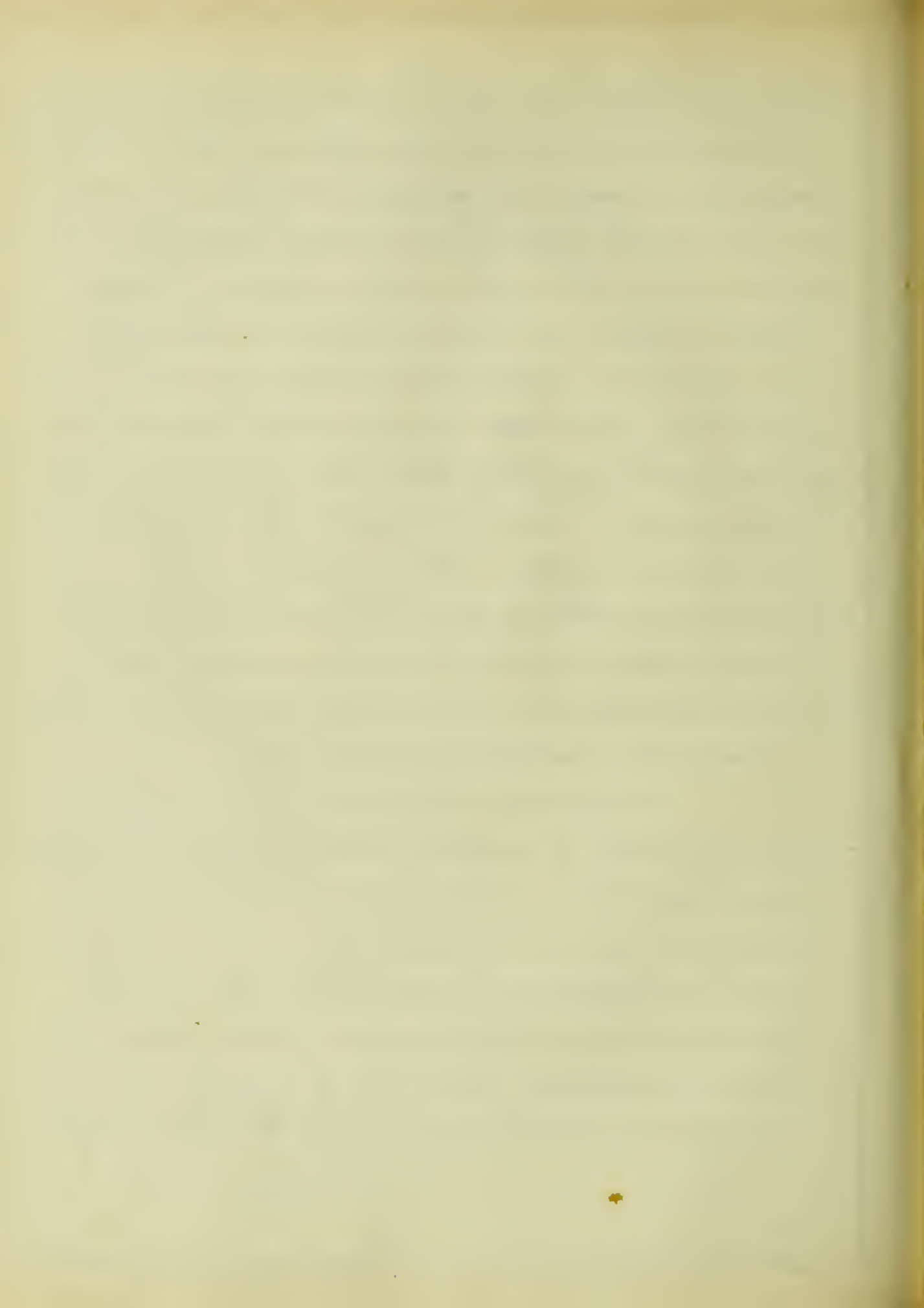
¹Phelps, English Romantic Movement, 117.

²The tower is a picture of the one Beckford had built to his Gothic castle, Fonthill Abbey.

³Vathek. ed. Morley. Pref. 12.

That scene in which the stranger, who had rolled himself up in a ball is kicked through the palace, down the steps and through the streets of Samarah till he rolled off the edge of an abyss is one of the most comical in all the Gothic romances. But beside the comic, there is pity and terror awakened. The fatal Giaour, the monster with "huge red eyes" and "teeth streaked with green" lures the Caliph and his wicked mother from one atrocious crime to another till they meet their just punishment in the magnificent Hall of Eblis where their hearts take fire and they are doomed to "wander in an eternity of unabating anguish." As in the fables, a moral is drawn at the end so Beckford's closing paragraph is, "Such is and should be the punishment of unrestrained passions and atrocious crimes!...and the chastisement of blind ambition, that would transgress those bounds which the Creator hath prescribed to human knowledge."

But the setting was to return to Europe and the tone to the Gothic of the Castle of Otranto. The Monk by Matthew Gregory Lewis (1795), the last of the supernatural Gothic romances (which I know of) consists of three vigorous volumes of terrific Gothic machinery. All the warning dreams, midnight ghosts, subterranean vaults where nuns are buried alive, evil spirits with snaky hair, wicked abbesses, magic mirrors, beautiful maidens shut up in convents and rescuing knights are inter-



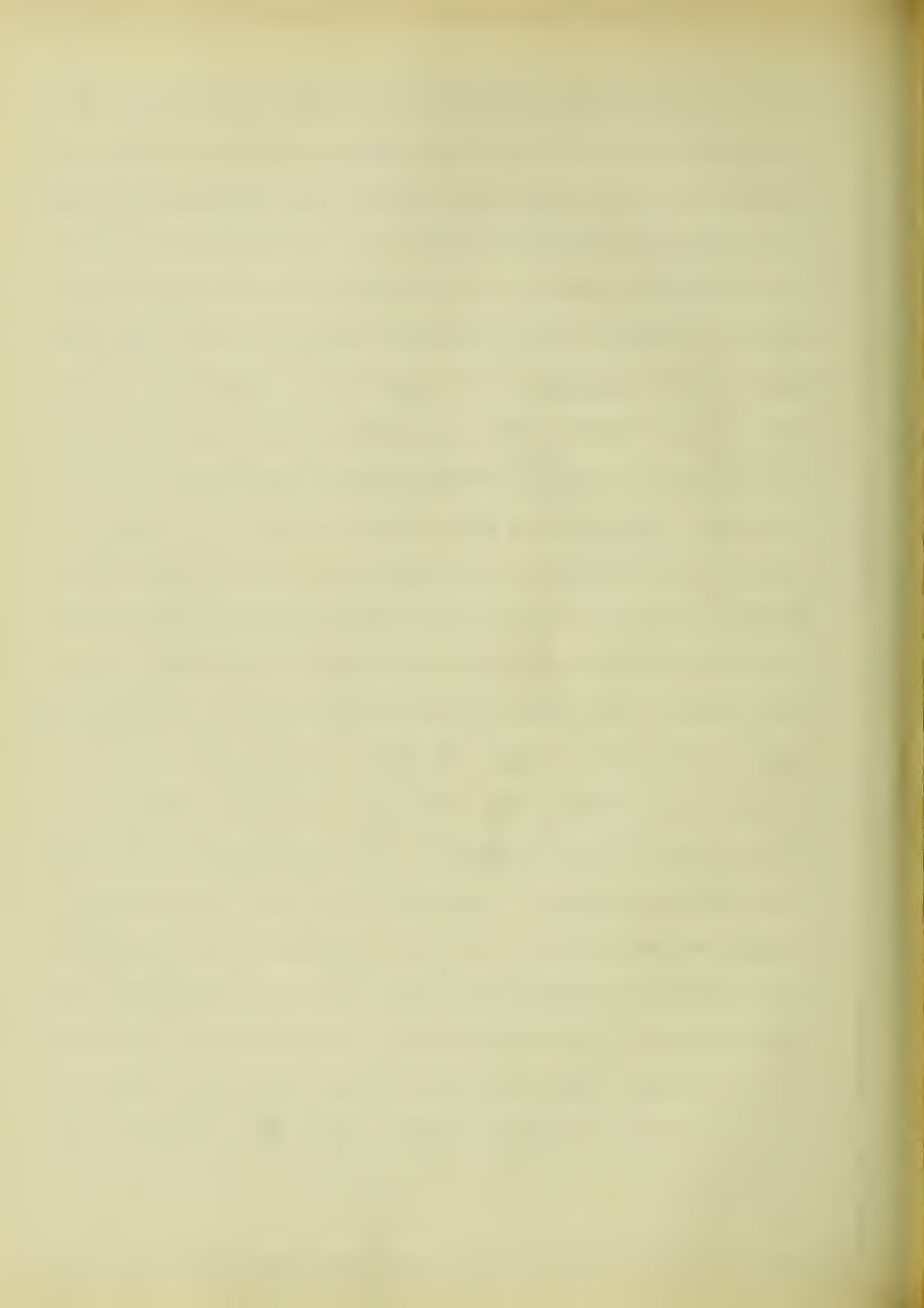
woven in the intricate plot. Convent life from its worst side and the horrors of the Inquisition are pictured in graphic scenes. The climax is reached when the convent is burned, the abbess mobbed, the maidens freed and married to their knights, and Ambrosio, the central figure of the book, a hypocritical monk, Madrid's idol, in his own blood signs over his polluted soul to the evil spirits just when the Inquisition was ready to pardon him. Like all the nefarious characters of these romances he pays the penalty for his ungoverned passions. The evil genius fastens his talons in the monk's shaven crown and carrying him high over mountains lets him fall. Crashing from crag to crag he finally falls mangled beside a stream and dies in the scorching sunlight and torture of insects swarming over his wounds. By a minute account of such abhorring scenes, Lewis sought to arouse terror, but as a result produced a wild, melodramatic story, formed from a vile, distorted mind¹.

The five romances² of Mrs. Radcliffe, published between 1789 and 1797 are the only ones in the mechanical division of the Gothic romances. They are so called because they seem to be written with no special intention except to follow the usual style of writing at that time. They are written upon the same

¹His use of magic and humor was suggested by the German Romanticists. See Carlyle's German Romance, vol. 1, 11.

²See Bibliography.

plan with characters differing only in name. Descriptions of nature, especially of forest and sea, and situations depicting terror aroused from superstitious fear from within, rather than from outside circumstances, make up the contents of her books. Mrs. Radcliffe's secluded and invalid life undoubtedly made her mind more sensitive and keen than it would otherwise have been enabling her to delineate with subtilty and imagination. It is said she was frequently alone at night and it is very probable she experienced then the fearful suspicions portrayed in her characters. For instance, Emily in the Mysteries of Udolpho, though a sensible girl, often allowed her mind to yield to its excessive sensibility and superstition. She was so sentimental and romantic that an effective nature scene would cause her to weep. Besides describing the effects of nature Mrs. Radcliffe delineates the power of music and poetry. But they are always of the pensive, melancholy kind and lyrical in nature. Every incident is romantic and sentimental. Old ruined castles and cloisters stand in the midst of a gloomy forest, which neighboring peasants say was the scene of former splendours but is now the haunt of spirits of those who died there very mysteriously. Mysterious music of a plaintive, sweet tone is heard at night coming from the haunted places. But this mystery which Mrs. Radcliffe so cleverly instills into her works, is finally explained away.



The picture which Emily had seen with a shudder turns out to be a wax figure, the voices heard in a certain chamber of the castle of Udolpho come from a man who was in the habit of walking in a subterranean passage.

These novels contribute nature descriptions (though they are of a very general nature, the pictures drawn of Florence or Venice could be applied to any city) and mind delineations. They became the models for succeeding writers which are often spoken of as composing the "Radcliffe School."

The psychological novels are of natural sequence to the Radcliffe type. They are revolutionary because of the revolutionary spirit of the time. Godwin's Caleb Williams (1794) echoes the cry of individual liberty then filling the air of revolutionary France. It is a work which shows Godwin's political principles that the rich are predominant over the poor, that prisons and such institutions are detrimental to happiness. The story narrates the conflict of two strong characters, one the respected Falkland who conceals his crime of murder beneath his worldly reputation, and the other Caleb Williams a feudal subject whose insatiate curiosity leads him to remorse. He finds out his master's secret and pays the penalty by being bounded from place to place by Falkland's spies. The pity and terror of the story lies in the awful extortions of the minds of the char-

acters. Mystery is awakened around the old castle of the robbers of the forest and a trunk hidden in a closet which seems to be the cause of Falkland's insane actions. But Falkland evidently meant to deceive his secretary Caleb into investigating circumstances at his home and not publish them abroad, for the trunk does not, as the reader suspects, contain the skeleton of a murdered relative but some family jewels. The defensive tone in this book gives it the style of a detective story and Godwin has been called the author of the first detective story.

Charles Brockden Brown in America was greatly influenced by Caleb Williams. His Wieland, or the Transformation (1798) Ormond (1799) and Arthur Mervyn (1799) are patterned after Godwin's production. The setting is American and the tone more intense and sensational than in the English novel. In Wieland, the chief character does not go through an agonizing series of mental states in consequence of any act of his as Falkland does but by virtue of his being duped into what he was convinced was a divine command, Brown's heroes are swayed by outside circumstances, which compel them through constant bickerings to commit a crime. In Wieland the nefarious character is Carwin, who, by the power of ventriloquism, causes Wieland to murder his wife and children and finally to commit suicide, and separates devoted lovers who are united as in all these romances.

Brown's political views were inculcated into his works just as Godwin's were in his. Brown's treatment of his subject matter resembles Godwin's in dwelling tiresomely upon details that are sometimes disgusting, as for instance the yellow fever scenes in Ormond. In Arthur Mervyn is the same plan as in Caleb Williams. Welbeck hides his crimes beneath his reputation while he uses the poor youth Arthur as a means to gain his own ends.

Godwin's influence was felt also by his son-in-law Shelley, who, sharing some of Godwin's Rosicrucian doctrines, wrote two romances. When he was but sixteen he wrote Zastrozzi "a wild story, full of descriptions of caves and forests, out-laws and assassinations."¹ It is the story of a virtuous Verezzi, persecuted and ruined by the effervescent passion of a "quilty siren," Matilda Contessa de Laurentina, in league with a mysterious and dark browed Zastrozzi, who has, in Chapter the last, a family grudge to clear off. A deep buried romance named Zofloya or the Moor (there is a great force of suggestion in the letter Z) is recorded to have been the model of Zastrozzi. A curiosity of literature this novel would be, if merely on the ground of its authorship, and of its gorgeous absurdity...

"The only purpose which Zastrozzi can serve at the present day, except to raise a hearty laugh, is to furnish a few

¹Shelley Society's Publications, Ser. 1V, No. 4, 114.

indications how far Shelley's anti-christian opinions had been developed at that early date.¹"

In 1810, Shelley published St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian, whose style is even more extravagant, the situation being as wildly impossible and the language fully as inflated. St. Irvyne is the name of the birthplace and family of one Wolfstein, to whom Ginotti, the Rosicrucian a mysterious person of superhuman size imparts the secret of magic. Shelley's original in this is said to have been Godwin's St. Leon, where the hero learns the secret of the philosopher's stone and elixir of vitae.²"

The elixir of life plays the important part in Frankenstein written by Godwin's daughter, Mrs. Shelley, in 1818. Cross says, this "is at once the best written and the most ghastly production of Gothic art."³ It has rapid action with changes of scenes from the high peaks of the Alps to the dreary plains of Northern Scotland. The whole work is so conducted that the two opposing forces, Frankenstein who learned the secret of life and triumphed in producing a deformed, superhuman sized fiend who follows him with menace, and the monster who awakens our pity in being brought into the world which spurns him and our terror because of his murders and terrible thirst for revenge, stand out

¹Shelley Society's Publications, Ser. 1V, No. 2, 12 et seq.

²Shelley Society's Publications, Ser. 1V, No. 4, 114.

³Cross, W.L., Development of the English Novel, 108.

strikingly from the minor incidents of the book. It does not deal with castles, subterranean passages, haunted chambers or monastic and Inquisition cruelties. It is supernatural in the power which Frankenstein discovers by chemical agencies, which he uses to his sorrow. The work has as its moral the crushing results of over ambition, the favorite theme of the Gothics as well as contemporary writers.

Charles Robert Maturin, a learned Irish clergyman, wrote his Melmoth the Wanderer, in 1820. It is of three volumes and made up of stories within a story. Its plot is so intricate that one really needs a diagram to understand it. The story itself is of the same wierd nature as other Gothic tales though of a lighter vein. Melmoth wanders over the earth for a hundred and fifty years seeking men's souls. When he comes back to his parental home he dreams of his death which reminds us of the fate of Lewis's Monk which Lewis portrayed as an actual occurrence. He dreamed he fell from a precipice, grasping at the forms of those he sought to ruin, which were ascending to heaven while he was falling into an "ocean of fire." The mystery is cleared with a completion which reminds us very forcibly of Mrs. Radcliffe. One character, Elinore is patterned after Emily in Mysteries of Udolpho. She is affected to tears by romantic scenes of nature and when her warrior lover partook of their religious devotion

she "turned aside and wept with delicious agony." Scenes of suffering in convent, underground vaults where two lovers were imprisoned for life are dwelt upon unmercifully. Maturin often speaks of such scenes as "worthy of a Murillo, a Roso, or any of those painters, who inspired by the genius of suffering, delight in representing the most exquisite of human forms in the extremity of human agony."

In this chapter we have traced the Gothic elements through the chief Gothic romances which Smollett ushered in by his superstitious, terrifying scenes and melancholy tone. To these Walpole added chivalry, magic and characters which live in all the Gothic works. Though his Castle of Otranto was a discovery and a new type suitable to the needs and demands of romanticism it was too wild and improbable to be copied in its extravagant use of the supernatural. Miss Reeve endeavoured to produce a romance within reasonable bounds and though she partially succeeded her ghost is as incredible as Walpole's giant in armour. Her service to Gothic romanticism lies in the scheme of confining the ghosts and mysteries to only a part of the castle. Mrs. Radcliffe came in time to give a fixed tone to Gothic style in addition to her descriptive scenes in nature- a contribution which leaves its traces even upon 19th century novels. She also has terrifying, pitiable scenes in her romances but the mysteries they con-

tain are explained as natural issues. The terrors surrounding old Gothic castles and the beautiful heroine languishing for her lover in imprisonment are transported to convents which give over their bad characters to the horrors of the Inquisition. Lewis and Maturin are exponents of this style of writing, and Maturin gives us a detailed account of his characters' mental states. Godwin and Brown extolled political sentiments by picturing the terrors of contemporary civil and social life. The tales from the East were occupying the English mind at the time of Beckford who, coupling magic and mystery with Oriental setting, gave us Vathek the only one of its kind. Witchcraft and necromancy gave way to pseudo-scientific principles in Godwin, Shelley and his wife. Brown in America makes use of ventriloquism as the source of his mysterious crimes. The Rosicrucian theories which figure conspicuously in the latter Gothic romances give a tangible touch and more natural interpretation. Thus the Gothic romances, containing characteristics common to them all, have certain fundamental qualities of their own which separate them into three main classes- the supernatural, the mechanical, and the psychological and revolutionary.

CHAPTER IV.

The gloomy exaggerations, the horror and mystery, the sentimental excesses of the characters of the Gothic romance, were to be shorn away. These elements however had served their purpose, they had revolutionized public taste; had stirred it up to a realization of its own. Now only those realistic characteristics which are true at all times and for all people were to descend to succeeding novels. Characters which had served merely as exponents were to be created anew into living individuals who make their own life, seemingly without the hand of an overseeing author to guide them. Plot was to be woven by the people in the story rather than to be made first and filled in mechanically with types of human beings. The mediaeval setting, however, was more or less retained but with a more realistic treatment, and was a vestige of romanticism which distinguishes the historical novels of Scott.

This tendency to realize and make more natural the tone of novels was manifested directly, as the realistic novels of the 19th century and indirectly by ridicule, as in essays and novels upon the Don Quixote type. The reaction against Gothicism was started perhaps in the latter 18th century and was well under way in the early 19th century.

Miss Austen's Northanger Abbey is said to have been written in 1789 but was not published until 1803. It is an ingenious story which satirizes those Gothic elements which Miss Austen could not regard otherwise than as ridiculous. Her heroine is not beautiful, and accomplished but awkward and "could never learn or understand anything till she was taught, and sometimes not even then, for she was often inattentive and occasionally stupid.¹" When she had grown up she was ready to marry; but, contrary to the destiny of the Gothic heroine, "there was not one lord in the neighborhood; no not even a baronet. There was not one family among their acquaintance who had reared and supported a boy accidentally found at their door; not one young man whose origin was unknown. Her father had no ward, and the squire of the parish no children.²" When Catherine goes to Northanger Abbey she finds it a modern residence bright and cheerful which she had pictured to be like the Castle of Udolpho, a gloomy Gothic structure of which only turrets could be seen above the surrounding oaks. The first night there, which was stormy she went through the trembling experiences of Mrs. Radcliffe's Emily. She discovered an old chest whose heavy lid resisted her efforts for a time but, to the delight of the girl trembling with delicious expectation of a gruesome mystery, finally flies open to disclose

¹Northanger Abbey, Cha. 1.

²Ibid.

"a white cotton counterpane, properly folded and reposing at one end of the chest in undisputed possession." This is a take-off on the manner in which Gothic writers practiced the trick of arousing fear to a high tension and suddenly causing it to drop leaving the reader in a stupid bewilderment. Miss Austen follows these methods but in such a clever, seemingly unconscious way that her situations are of just the right sort to bring out the intended satire. When her heroine is low in spirits she consigns her "to a sleepless couch which is the true heroine's portion; to a pillow strewn with thorns and wet with tears. And lucky may she think herself, if she get another good night's rest in the course of the next three months¹."

This mode of satire on the Gothic is used also in The Heroine by E.S. Barrett published in 1813. There is a reprint, edited by Prof. Walter Raleigh, Oxford University Press, 1909. This book is perhaps the suggestion for The Hero, or the Adventures of a Night, which is "ingeniously made up by stringing together phrases and passages from the most popular Gothic novels²." E.S. Barrett also wrote, in 1813, Adventures of Cherubina which is classed in the anti-romance group with Northanger Abbey.³

The Miniature, a periodical paper, published in 1805 gives the same reacting tendencies towards Gothicism. Number 11,

¹Northanger Abbey, Cha. 111.

²Loshe, L.D. The Early American Novel, 56n.

³Cross, W.L. Development of the English Novel, 171.

which was published April 30th, 1804 is made up of two articles, Remarks on Novels and Romances and a Receipt for a Modern Romance. There is a great deal of witty sarcasm introduced which makes the Receipt a laughable concoction of real Gothic sentiment.

The author remarks that novels are the same as they were twenty years ago but there is a wonderful change in romance. "We have no more captive Princesses, amorous Quixotes and Moorish sorcery. Blue Dragons, green Knights, black Giants and enchanted Castles, yield to ruined Abbeys, ivy mantled Turrets, dark Passages, western Towers, Monks, Nuns and antiquated Abbesses. All sorcery, magic and such like machinery, are safe locked up in the poet's brain; and in their stead Ghosts real and imaginary, Phantoms and Hobgoblins are let out, sufficient to frighten every man, woman and child in Christendom¹."

The Receipt for a Modern Romance is as follows: "In the first place, to constitute this wonderful performance, it is necessary that the scene should be laid in Italy, Spain or any other region where cloisters abound; for a Friar and a Nun are as necessary ingredients in a Romance, as oil or vinegar in a salad. England during the time of the feudal system, may serve as a succedaneum;... The next provision is the Hero, who being

¹Miniature 1805 No.11.

the reputed son of a vassal or a clod-hopper, by some curious instinct, or wonderful inspiration, is to set out he knows not whither or in what manner, to unravel the mystery of his birth. The first circumstance must of course be a storm, with plenty of vivid flashes, distant rumbling, with a small portion of a lonely moor. Here our prose must be somewhat delirious, till we conduct it, together with its hero, safe to the walls of a half ruined castle. There our author must not forget his dried up moats and mouldering arches; and let him be sure to cover his turrets with a good coating of moss and ivy; if an owl can be procured at any price, the mixture will be greatly improved. A clanging of chains must next succeed, with a most dismal groan, reaching through the vaulted passages. Here Don Bernardo, Don Sebastian, or Don what you will, dash through thick and thin, till he tumbles down, extinguishes the lamp, and leaves himself and the reader in all the mazes of mysterious confusion; and a sudden gleam of light must instantly flash and disappear to plunge both of them into more impenetrable obscurity. Horror must be heaped on horror, and darkness thicken upon darkness, amidst cold, clammy carcasses, accumulated skeletons, blood-stained daggers etc. our prose must now run quite mad; mobs of metaphors, unlike similies and ill-paired figures jostling and supplanting each other, must add new terrors to the terrific description. Nor must our brains cease

to be racked for fine words, far fetched expressions, half-concluded periods, and sentences breaking off in the middle...

Soon after a convent must appear with a villainous Friar and an intriguing Abbess, with matins, vespers, eating, drinking, and all the concomitants of a monastic life. Then by a sort of presto or conjuror's wand we must raise a few spectres in a northern tower exactly as the clock strikes one, but by no means later; together with a bell tolling without any sexton, and plenty of music without any fiddlers. Next must be got ready the scowling brows of the marquis, the tender moan of his amiable daughters, three or four half-starved conspirators, and three or four domestics dead drunk. The whole is necessarily to be concluded by the blowing up of the castle with gunpowder in the reign of Alfred; and our phantoms are to be accounted for, by a little phosphorus in the time of the Crusades. We may stick a banditti here and there by way of sweetmeats and sprinkle a few Alps in the room of sugar-plums. A low murmuring voice, a mysterious ring, or some animated armour may be thrown in, as occasion shall require."

Further on the author says "such is the ridiculous absurdity with which the age is fed... We are indeed much at a loss which to admire most, the total want of fire and imagination, or the systematic contempt of judgement and sense¹."

¹ Miniature 1805 No. 11 ii.

Though reactionary forces were at work the Gothic element continued to exist in literature till about 1850. Writers startled their readers with mysterious sounds and fed their superstitious minds. But the historical novel after the time of Scott, usurped the territory of the Gothic romance which had spent itself. Such wild enthusiasm, grotesque horror, and supernatural fancy was too transitory for sound minds, after the first craze was supplied. The mad machinery of Gothicism though to leave behind its good points was to be laughed out of existence or into something far better by such as a Northanger Abbey and a Miniature.

CONCLUSION.

Before leaving this subject it would be well worth our while to look a little further and follow the traces which Gothicism left on succeeding works. It would be exceedingly interesting to show the Gothic elements in poetry; in Byron, for instance, whose love for wild scenery of forest and sea was greatly intensified by Mrs. Radcliffe; or in Shelley, whose revolutionary ideas found adequate expression through Gothic sentiments in "Prometheus Unbound." But we will here consider only those prose works which have the Gothic stamp.

In 1811, in America, appeared The Asylum, or Alonzo and Melissa, which Cross classes as half-historic and half-Gothic,¹ while Miss Loshe describes it as Gothic.² Anyway, it has the Gothic tone, with Gothic characters and castle, but the time is that of the Revolutionary War instead of the Middle Ages. The heroine refuses to marry the man her tyrannical father chooses for her, and in consequence is shut up in a Gothic castle in Connecticut, where she hears strange noises and sees balls of fire rolling down the halls. The man she loves joins the marine corps and out at sea is captured and goes through thrilling experiences but finally gets back to America. He and Melissa are finally united

¹Cross, Development of the English Novel, 151.

²Loshe, Early American Novel, 53 et. sq.

after he had visited what was reported to be her grave but which really was that of a cousin of the same name. This work has all the extravagant sentimentalism and elaborate scenery descriptions of Mrs. Radcliffe. But this wild and unnatural treatment disappears gradually. Irving, who was too common sensed to deal with the supernatural, ascribes his ghosts and witches to traditional stories and treats his phantoms and dancing furniture in a comic light. His stories are short; built on the plan of the German romancers Ludwig Fieck and Ernst Hoffman, who also influenced Brown.

Bulwer Lytton's Zanoni (1842) is written along the lines of Rosicrucian doctrines portrayed by Godwin and Shelley. The Rosicrucian himself is dealt with particularly in Lytton's work, however.

But the truest descendant of Gothic romancers is Edgar Allan Poe whose stories revel in horror and mystery as extensively as the longer stories of the 18th century. His most terrific Tale is The Fall of the House of Usher (1840). The old crumbling castle, the dark stagnant tarn and the ill-fated inhabitants without one digression move with a solemn tread to the terrible end. The Lady Madeline, a cataleptic, is buried in a copper vault. At night during a terrific storm, her brother and his friend in an upper chamber hear the breaking of the cof-

fin and the grating of the heavy doors and see the Lady Madeline in her bloody shroud in the doorway. Her appearance instantly causes the death of her maddened brother.

But Poe's stories lack that moral inference which marks the 18th century novels. Leigh Hunt thought a perfect ghost story has "moral utility" as well as excitement. He disclosed the moral qualities in A Tale for the Chimney Corner but did not create excitement. His story has importance to Gothic romance, because it quietly ushers in the sentiments of Hawthorne.

Cross tells us that the "supernatural world was with Hawthorne but the inner world of the conscience." All through his novels, especially the Scarlet Letter (1850) and the House of Seven Gables (1851) is narrated the workings of the mind and the shaping of outside circumstances as the efforts of a guilty conscience. A dark, heavy, Puritanic tone pervades the melancholy scenes of witchcraft, magic portraits, funerals and mesmerism.

Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights (1847) portrays all the madness and terror arising from a wild thirst for revenge. The story is of a man infuriated by the world which slights him because of his mysterious birth. All through his life he defies God and man and even in death his eyes "stare in exultation and his parted lips and sharp white teeth sneer too."

Cross, Development of the English Novel, 164.

Thus we see that Gothic romance exerted an influence upon the novel writing which came after it, in bequeathing to it, its terror and wonder and its imaginative tone.

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